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# HUMAN RIGHTS IN EAST TIMOR

The United Nations Human Rights Commission plans to consider the human rights situation in East Timor at its meeting in Geneva, February-March 1985.

Australia is a member of this Commission.

Please urge the Hawke Government to strongly defend the human rights of the Timorese people at this important meeting. Write today.

At its national conference in July the ALP expressed its 'grave concern' at the situation in East Timor. It called for access for human rights organisations and for 'an independent international mission to enter the territory to make an independent and impartial report on conditions'.

The approaching meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights is an excellent opportunity for Australia to act on this policy. Australia is a member of this Commission for the first time under the Hawke Government. The 42 other countries on the Commission will undoubtedly be influenced by the position Australia takes because of its proximity to East Timor.

At its last session in 1983 the Commission merely decided to keep the issue under review. This might be good politics but would have had no impact in Jakarta where responsibility for human rights abuses in Timor rests.

A strong and specific resolution is needed. In line with ALP policy Australia should call for an independent international commission of investigation into the human rights situation in East Timor.

Access to Timor by reputable human rights organisations will undoubtedly reduce human rights abuses. Calls for such access have come from many quarters over the last twelve months including 123 US Congressional Representatives, the Pope, and international aid agencies. In its latest submission to the UN in August 1984, Amnesty International re-stated its belief 'that access to the territory by international bodies should be facilitated . . . (Amnesty) is concerned at the difficulties faced by international organisations . . . in gaining such access'.

The UN Human Rights meeting is the time to press the Australian Government to heed these calls and that made by all sections of the Labor Party at the recent ALP Conference.

**Write today to:**

1. **Mr Bob Hawke,**
   **Prime Minister,**
   **Parliament House,**
   **Canberra ACT 2600.**
2. **Federal Labor MPs.**

**And press release your message.**

## Mgr. Belo (head of the Catholic Church in East Timor)

*'We live under oppression. The Timorese want peace and liberty, but at present the whole of East Timor is like prison'.* (July 1984)

## Labor MPs

*'Violence has become a way of life in East Timor'.*

(23 Labor MPs to Portuguese Foreign Minister, September 1984)

## ALP Policy

*'The ALP indicates grave concern at reports of renewed fighting in East Timor and about the threats to human life and safety there, and calls on the Indonesian Government to give free access to humanitarian relief teams, to international organisations such as Red Cross, Amnesty and the Commission of Jurists, and to allow an independent international mission to enter the territory to make an independent and impartial report on conditions'.* (July 1984)

## Pope John Paul II

*'It is the ardent wish of the Holy See that all the rights of individuals be respected and that every effort be made to lighten the sufferings of the (Timorese) people'.* (July 1984)

## Amnesty International (August 1984)

*'Amnesty International continues to be gravely concerned at the situation of human rights in East Timor . . . The pattern of human rights violations established over several years remains substantially the same'.*

▶Torture

*'The Indonesian authorities have not taken steps to countermand standing policies which condone torture and extrajudicial killings'.*

▶Arbitrary killings

*'Several mutually independent sources (have) alleged that as many as 200 persons in the village of Kraras, Viqueque, were killed by Indonesian troops soon after the killing of 16 Indonesian soldiers on August 8, 1983'.*

*'Amnesty has received information that approximately 100 men living in the vicinity of the village of Hauba near Bobonaro in the West of the territory were taken into custody and killed by Indonesian troops in March 1984'.*

▶'Disappearances' and executions

*'Amnesty understands several hundred persons have been arrested in East Timor since August 1983, particularly in the areas of Dili, Baucau and Viqueque. A substantial number of these persons are reported to have simply 'disappeared'. The organisation fears, on the basis of its own inquiries, that some of those persons were executed after being taken into custody or died as a result of torture'.*

▶Trials

*'In the past year, the Indonesian authorities have also brought to trial a number of East Timorese charged with offences of a political nature. However in view of reports indicating that Indonesian forces in East Timor have continued to operate outside the framework of the law and of information casting doubt on the fairness and impartiality of the trial proceedings themselves, Amnesty International does not regard this development as marking a significant change in the human rights situation in the territory'.*

▶Exclusion of outside observers

*'Amnesty regretted the refusal of the (Indonesian) government to grant access to international trial observers (including Amnesty) . . .'*